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DDI-1092-70

20 April 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR: Assistant Deputy Director for Intelligence

SUBJECT: COINS Pressures

ED:

1. This note responds to your note on my memorandum on COINS pressures.

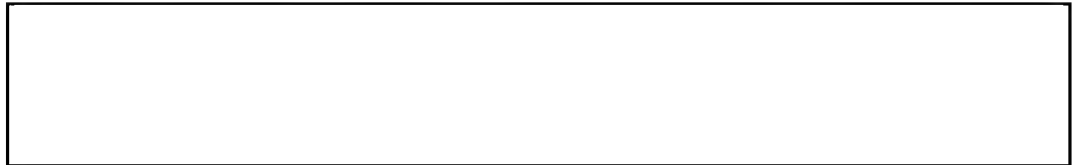
2. My efforts at brevity seem to have been counterproductive. My basic objection to the proposal marked "B" is that it is redundant because it is contained in the proposal marked "A". "A" calls for a team evaluation on COINS files. The files are divided into three categories. The most concerned agency furnishes a chairman and other agencies appoint representatives to participate in evaluating the existing files by 1 July 1970. The proposal in Tab B is a relatively minor subset of the task in "A" with different procedures and responsibilities. My basic point is that one review effort is enough and that the proposal in "A" is the better conceived of the two. I proposed, therefore, to cooperate with the proposal in Tab A and to reject that in Tab B.

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b. Your second question concerns the size of the effort required to implement the proposal in Tab E. We agree with your observation that the evaluation per se would probably not involve a great deal of work. The point we were trying to make was that the evaluating agency was more than likely to ask the operating agency to undertake large scale, costly improvements of the file, your CRS biographic files for example.

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4. I have asked [redacted] to pull several OB records from COINS and to get from OSR a statement of the work involved in the specific evaluation in the Tab B proposal. It will be forthcoming as soon as available—i.e., COINS must first cough up the necessary records.

5. The procedure discussed in your Paragraph 3—testing by the individual user of the file in CCINS—has generally already occurred. This testing has been informal and uncoordinated and has resulted in the reiterated conclusion that COINS is not very useful. These conclusions are, indeed, responsible for these four new [redacted] COINS proposals.

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6. Once again, the workload required to implement the proposal marked "B" is not very large and the Agency "posture" might be enhanced by cooperating with this duplicative review. I believe, however, that the examination will buy neither added knowledge or added utility for the COINS file, and it could add significantly to the COINS pressure on CRS resources.

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Dir

[redacted]
JOHN K. VANCE
Central Reference Service

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John:

I have no problem with your proposed reaction to any of the COINS proposals except item B (COINS/144-70, 02 April 1970). On this one I would like a little more information.

1. On the question of the appropriateness of the organizations designated to evaluate the various files.--

I assume from the COINS proposal that the purpose is to determine how useful and reliable the "user" finds the file. If NSA were the prime user of the COINS bio files, it would be quite appropriate for NSA to make a judgment on this matter. If CIA were the prime user of the COINS OB file, it would be similarly appropriate for CIA to evaluate the file for its purposes. I presume this is not the case at present in both instances. The question might be put in terms of the future-- Is NSA planning to become the primary user of the CIA and DIA bio files? I presume would say yes. But, NSA is now planning with us to use our files, but not through the COINS route. They have already made the judgment about the utility of our files under the proposed arrangement. Need more be done?

2. On the size of the effort to evaluate.--

The COINS proposal to evaluate more than ten records. If the number were not much larger than ten, say less than twenty, it appears to be a relatively small job. You say no, so obviously I don't understand what a complete record is or how many sets of ten to twenty packages there would be. Tell me more. I would

like you also to let me know what kind of reaction OSR would have to evaluating the OB files and how much time it would take. If NSA were to make an evaluation of your bio files as proposed, could they do it unilaterally or would you have to supply them with all the supplementary information necessary to make the evaluation?

3. This leads me to a somewhat different approach. What if NSA were to make the evaluation of 10 to 20 complete records for each of the bio files in COINS wholly on its own? This approach could be appropriate in the sense that it is a user (presumably) and should determine for itself whether the bio files in COINS are reliable and useful enough for NSA to depend upon. Similarly, CIA (OSR) could do the same thing. All this would be confined to the files now on COINS and the evaluation would be in terms of what information other than COINS would be available to the evaluator.

In sum, my problem with your reaction to the proposal is that the job does not seem to be very large, that users should be able to gauge for themselves how useful the files are to them, and that they should also know how reliable the files are for their purposes.

Ed Proctor